



# Does JVC's fine first entry into the DVD Recorder market mark the death of VHS? JVC DR-M1

N ADMITTING DEFEAT IN THE BATTLE TO keep its invention, the video cassette, alive, JVC has done the DVD Recorder market a big favour. Where we do have a few gripes with the UK's first combined -RW and RAM recorder is its connections. which include a RGB enabled Scart and separate S-Video and stereo audio outputs. However, the second Scart at the back of the unit, which connects set-top boxes, cannot handle RGB sources - it will only accept composite or S-Video sources. An i.Link terminal on front panel allows digital dubbing from camcorders.

Its 'living memory playback' feature - watching a

recording while it's still being made - is unique to RAM compatible machines or those with hard drives (and some DVD-RW machines). Recordings can be made onto almost universally accepted DVD-R discs.

DVD-RW disks can be formatted in video-mode or VR-mode. The latter allows free editing of contents but the former is more widely compatible. That's made up for by satellite control (only with Sky digiboxes) and the great 'free rate' (FR) recording mode, which calculates time left on the disc in various recording modes. This means you can chop and change between bitrates on one (recordable or rewritable) disc.

Picture quality in XP and SP mode recordings is clear, while the DR-MI's progressive scan playback works with recordings and PAL software.

With a such a low street price, JVC's DR-M1 is only a hard drive and a RGB input away from perfection.





# Great features and a familiar VCR look and make this perfect for the newly converted Panasonic DMR-E55

T MAY BE AT THE LOW END OF PANASONIC'S DIGA range, but what the DMR-E55 lacks (hard drive, DV input) it makes up for in great picture, sound and a myriad of recording functions.

That's largely down to its compatibility with DVD-RAM and DVD-R formats - but be aware that DVD-RW discs cannot be used for recording. Its four recording modes, XP, SP, LP and EP, range from one to eight hrs of recording time. Picture quality on XP mode is outstanding - as it is with pre-recorded DVDs - while the more flexible SP mode is excellent. Other modes are still better quality than VCR recordings.

Timer recordings can be made manually or with

VideoPlus, and there is also a PDC facility. The DVD-RAM format offers extensive editing and is perfect for daily recording and deleting. It also enables 'chasing playback', allowing you to watch the start of a recording while it continues to record, as well as 'time slip', which means the last 30 secs of live TV can be replayed - a boon for sports fans.

Playback functions include Direct Navigator, which displays full-motion thumbnails of all recordings on a disc, while Playback NR reduces picture noise and Virtual Surround Sound mode does what it says with only two speakers.

Expansive connectivity comprises component

video output for PAL and NSTC progressive scan, RGB Scart input and output, S-video support, an optical digital audio out and front panel AV inputs for connecting a camcorder. Missing features, like a memory card slot, i.Link digital video connection and hard drive can be found on other Panasonic models.



Versatility of DVD-RAM recording Attractive design

DVD-RW recordings would have been useful No DV input

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#### **DVD Recorders**

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MAKE	CYBERHOME	GOODMANS	HUMAX	JVC	LG DR4810	LOEWE	MICO
MODEL	CHDVR750	GDVD300R	DRP-560	DR-M1	DR4810	CENTROS	ESPEJO R311
SPECIFICATIONS							
Price Recording formats	£250 DVD+R, DVD+RW	£200 DVD+R. DVD+RW	£315 DVD+R, DVD+RW	£400 DVD-R, DVD-RW,	£300 DVD-R, DVD-RW	£450 DVD+R/+RW,	£200 DVD+R, DVD+RW
Recording formats				DVD-RAM		DVD-R/-RW	
RGB recording	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
DVD-Audio playback	NO YES/NO	NO YES/YES	NO YES/YES	NO YES/NO	NO YES/YES	N0 YES/YES	NO YES
Video CD/Super Video CD CD-R/CD-RW playback	YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES	YES
MP3/JPEG playback	YES/NO	YES/YES	N0/N0	YES/YES	YES/NO	YES/YES	YES/NO
Tel	+49 21 0238000	0870 8730080	020 8547 4240	0870 3305000	0870 6075544	0800 0276465	0852 2951 4538
Web	www.cyberhome-europe.de	www.goodmans.co.uk	www.humaxdigital.com	www.jvc.co.uk	www.lge.co.uk	www.loewe.de	www.micoelectric.com
FEATURES							
VideoPlus/PDC	YES/YES	YES/NO	YES/YES	YES/YES	NO/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
GuidePlus	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO VEC	NO
Variable bit-rate recording Non-linear editing	NO NO	NO NO	NO NO	YES YES	NO YES	YES YES	NO NO
Playlist editing	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO
Timer	6-event	8-event	6-event	8-event/one month	7-event	YES	6-event
No of recording modes Trick-play functions	5 YES	6 YES	5 YES	5 YES	3 YES	4 YES	5 YES
Zoom	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO
Progressive scan playback	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
	We say: Easy to install	We say: Onscreen user	We say: It's a bit light on	We say: RAM compati-	We say: Menus and	We say: Editing features	We say: Offers fewer
	with a good remote	interface is easy to	features, especially RGB	bility means fantastic	scans through DVD	combined with dual-RW	editing options than the
	which controls many of the functions, but has	navigate, while DVD playback is difficult	recording for digital TV and it can't divide	editing options and progressive scan gives a	chapters are smooth, and editing on DVD-RW	format support are great but the lack of progressive	Philips deck it was cloned from
	fairly basic features	to fault	DVD+RW recordings	great picture	discs in VR mode is easy	scan is a disappointment	
CONNECTIONS RGB Scart in/out	N0/YES	N0/YES	NO/YES	NO/YES	N0/YES	at this price NO/YES	NO/YES
Component video out	NOTES	NO/TES NO	NO/YES	YES	YES	YES	NO NO
DVI or HDMI out	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES/YES
S-video in/out	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
Composite video in/out Stereo audio out	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES
Optical digital audio out	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Electrical digital audio out	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
i.Link in/out	NO/NO	NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	NO	YES	NO/NO
Photo card slot	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO
	We say: Not RGB ready and only supports	We say: This budget recorder lacks RGB input	We say: You can't make RGB recordings from	We say: No RGB input is a letdown but	We say: The lack of inputs makes this virtually useless	We say: Neither Scart supports S-video or RGB	We say: No RGB input is bad for digibox users,
	composite and S-video		digital TV sources but you	recordings made from a	for making quality	input, so decent quality	and there's no RGB
	so set-top boxes can't be connected		can do DV dubbing from digital camcorders	good S-video source look excellent	recordings from digital TV	digibox recordings require plugging an S-video cable	out if you select S-video input
VERDICT						into its front!	
Ease of Use	***	***	***	****	***	***	***
Features	***	***	***	****	***	***	*** ****
Looks Picture	***	***	***	****	***	****	***
Sound	****	***	****	****	****	****	****
Value	****	****	***	****	***	**	***
	We say: This retro	We say: It may be a	We say: By no means a	We say: Fantastic audio	We say: It might be	We say: A disappointing	We say: There are too
	looking model is at the	budget DVD recorder but	bad DVD recorder at	(although there's no	available at a decent	case of style over	many cut corners here
	lower end of the market and comes with what	this smart model is the equal of many more	Humax's first attempt. Quite easy to use and fine	manual control of recording levels) and	price, but there's a good reason. Despite	substance. Lacking even rear S-video input let	for the budget price to overcome. It's too easy
	you would expect in the	expensive units. DVD	for recording analogue	very good picture	attractive casing this is	alone RGB, there's no	to mistakenly record
	way of features. A budget Philips clone	playback picture quality is more than adequate while	terrestrial TV but, sadly, not digital. Its eye-catching	quality, combined with an attractive street	a fairly mediocre recorder that suffers	proper way to get good recordings from digital	over a partially recorded disc, the remote lacks
	with limited editing	sound too is very reliable.	design, complemented by a	price, equals a good	from limited editing	TV, which is daft, and	any class and DVD+R
	options, it's nevertheless a good performer when	Recordings made in SP mode are near-DVD	stylishly thin remote control, is let down by a	value unit. Slight pulling noticeable with captions	options and a poor array of inputs. Fewer	there's no progressive scan playback. Dual	recordings can't easily be edited. We do like the
	it comes to sound, while	quality, although sounds	sluggish menu system and,	but overall it can't be	recording modes than	format recording is handy	audio output, which is
	recordings made in SP mode are as good as the	quality is fairly weak. All in all a great value	above all, the price. A good unit but other	faulted as a DVD player. The combination of	most models and a bland picture make this	but apart from the excellent editing features	good on both surround sound sources and CDs,
	original broadcast.	recorder for the price, just	recorders offer just as	DVD-R and DVD-RAM	a limited, albeit easy to	it's quite tricky to use.	and the picture quality is
	Better, though, to spend a bit more and get an	don't expect miracles.	much for the money. A sizeable drop in price may	gives you freedom while editing. All it needs is an	use, deck that is worth avoiding: better units		excellent. What a shame it has no RGB input for
	RGB input and more		be needed if Humax is to	RGB input.	are available, and		recording digital
	flexible editing capability.		keep up with its rivals.		much cheaper.		TV sources.
OVERALL	****	$\star \star \star$	****	****	***	***	***

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MAVE	MUSTEV	PANASONIC	DANASONIC				SONY
MAKE MODEL	MUSTEK R100B	PANASONIC DMR-E55	PANASONIC DMR-E65	PHILIPS DVD R80	PHILIPS DVD R610	PHILIPS DVD R615	RDR-GX300
SPECIFICATIONS							
Price	£200	£300	£400	£500	£200	£230	£400
Recording formats	DVD+R, DVD+RW	DVD-RAM, DVD-R	DVD-RAM, DVD-R	DVD+R, DVD+RW	DVD+R, DVD+RW	DVD+R, DVD+RW	DVD+R, +RW, -R, -RW
RGB recording	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
DVD-Audio playback	NO	YES (2-channel)	YES (2-channel)	NO	NO	NO	NO
Video CD/Super Video CD CD-R/CD-RW playback	YES/YES YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES	YES/NO YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES	YES/YES YES/YES
MP3/JPEG playback	YES/YES	YES/NO	YES/YES	NO/NO	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/NO
Tel	0870 0132017	08705 357 357	08705 357 357	0870 9009070	0870 9009070	0870 9009070	08705 111999
Web	www.mustek.de	www.panasonic.co.uk	www.panasonic.co.uk	www.philips.co.uk	www.philips.co.uk	www.philips.co.uk	www.sony.co.uk
FEATURES							
VideoPlus/PDC	NO/NO	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
GuidePlus	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO
Variable bit-rate recording Non-linear editing	NO NO	YES YES	YES YES	NO NO	NO NO	NO NO	YES YES
Playlist editing	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES
Timer	8-event	16 event/one month	16 event/one month	15-event/one month	6-event/one month	6-event/one month	YES
No of recording modes	5	5	5	7	7	8	6
Trick-play functions Zoom	NO YES	YES NO	YES NO	YES YES	NO YES	NO YES	YES NO
Progressive scan playback	YES	YES	YES		YES	YES	YES
<u> </u>	We say: Instead of a	We say: This recorder is	We say: This recorder is	We say: The first	We say: Not yet rated	We say: Similar to the	We say: Sony's entry-
	'time remaining'	ideal for time-shifting TV	ideal for time-shifting TV	recorder to include	We say. Not yet lated	entry-;level DVD R610	level machine is a basic
	counter, the machine gives a useless readout	shows but not for recording camcorder footage and	shows as well as recording camcorder footage and	GuidePlus, which makes timer recordings simple.		with the addition of an 8hr recording mode	model for recording TV shows with chasing
	of of the percentage of	digital still images	digital still images	Editing is limited		on recording mode	playback
CONNECTIONS	space left		VEC				
RGB Scart in/out Component video out	NO/YES YES	YES YES	YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES
DVI or HDMI out	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
S-video in/out	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	N0/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
Composite video in/out Stereo audio out	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES
Optical digital audio out	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Electrical digital audio out	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
i.Link in/out	NO/NO	NO/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	NO	YES/NO	NO
Photo card slot	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
	We say: Plenty of outputs but recording from	We say: Has everything you might need for	We say: Basically, this is a DMR-E55 with the	We say: No problems with connections. There	We say: Not yet rated	We say: Not yet rated	We say: Not yet rated
	digital TV via S-video	recording analogue or	addition of a DV (i.Link)	is even iLink to take DV			
	suffers from a flawed MPEG converter	digital TV but won't accept DV footage	input plus PC card and SD card slots	camcorder footage			
VERDICT	WIF LO COnverter	accept DV lootage	Card SIOLS				
Ease of Use	**	****	***	****			
Features	***	****	****	****			
Looks Picture	***	****	****	****			
Sound	***	****	****	****			
Value	***	****	****	****			
	Microso Decelle II.	Manager This last table	Mercure 12 - 11 - 1 - 1	We can be filled	Marcan National and	Marcan Nutration	Mercury Nutrients Ind
	We say: Despite the long specs, this deck is	We say: This elegant deck may not be the cheapest	We say: Like the cheaper DMR-E55 this elegant	We say: Colourful and detail-laden pictures on	We say: Not yet rated	We say: Not yet rated	We say: Not yet rated
	very average when it	DVD recorder out there,	deck is not the most	recordings made in			
	comes to basics like picture and sound. It	but but it's one of the best, thanks to the	affordable but its recording and playback performance	optimum modes makes this a special deck.			
	may be multiregional	combination of DVD-RAM	is so damn good it makes	Others can compete			
	and have lots of inputs, but the lack of	flexibility and DVD-R compatibility. The RGB	it impossible to seriously fault (though DV camcorder	there, but not over the inclusion by Philips of			
	VideoPlus or similar	input on the recorder is	enthusiasts should note	GuidePlus, a seriously			
	programme guide and the fact that the	vital for anyone with digital TV (Freeview, Sky	that there is no DV output for dubbing edited footage	special addition. Editing may be limited and the			
	progressive scan func-	or cable). A great	back to a camcorder).	menu navigation may be			
	tion copes only with NTSC marks this out as	all-purpose recorder for day-to-day use, and	Overall, a great machine if you can justify the price.	a little slow but it's so feature-packed we don't			
	a dubious foreign import	reasonably priced.		have any major gripes.			
	clearly not aimed at UK consumers.						
OVERALL	$\star \star \star$	*****	****	****			

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## **DVD Recorders**

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MAKE MODEL	SONY RDR-GXD500	SONY RDR-GX700	THOMSON DTH 8005	TOSHIBA DR-1	YAMADA DVR-8000	HITACHI DV-RX7000
SPECIFICATIONS						
Price	£500	£500	£400	£400	£200	£279
Recording formats	DVD+R/+RW, DVD-R/-RW	DVD+R/+RW, DVD-R/RW	DVD+R, DVD+RW	DVD-R/-RW, DVD-RAM	DVD+R, DVD+RW	DVD-RAM. DVD-R, DVD-RW
RGB recording	YES	YES	YES	NO		YES
DVD-Audio playback Video CD/Super Video CD	NO YES/YES	NO YES/YES	NO NO/NO	NO YES/NO	NO YES/YES	N0 YES/YES
CD-R/CD-RW playback	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
MP3/JPEG playback	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/YES		YES/NO	YES/YES
Tel	08705 111999	08705 111999	01732 520920	0870 4424424	0870 9063304	01628 643000
Web	www.sony.co.uk	www.sony.co.uk	www.thomson-europe.com	www.toshiba.co.uk	www.umax.co.uk	www.hitachidigital.com media.com
FEATURES						
VideoPlus/PDC	N0/YES	YES/YES	NO/YES	YES/	NO/NO	YES
GuidePlus	SOMETHING SIMILAR	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Variable bit-rate recording Non-linear editing	YES YES	YES YES	NO NO	YES YES	NO	N0 YES
Non-linear editing Playlist editing	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO YES	YES
Timer	YES	YES	16-event		YES	YES
No of recording modes	6	6	6	3	4	4
Trick-play functions	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Zoom Progressive scan playback	NO YES	NO YES	YES NO	YES YES	NO YES	NO NO
	We say: The only UK DVD recorder with a built-in Freeview digital terrestrial TV tuner	We say: Similar to the GXD500 but with no Freeview tuner - has DV camcorder inputs instead	We say: The high price tag does not include the picture- enhancing progressive scan function	We say: Use of DVD-RAM opens-up editing possibilities, but watch cross-compatibility with other DVD players	We say: Navigation display is long-winded and of all the recording modes, only HQ is of any notable quality	We say: Not yet reviewed
CONNECTIONS						1.000
RGB Scart in/out Component video out	YES/YES YES	YES/YES YES	YES/YES	YES/ YES	YES/ YES	YES NO
DVI or HDMI out	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
S-video in/out	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
Composite video in/out	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES	YES/YES
Stereo audio out Optical digital audio out	YES	YES YES	YES YES	YES YES	YES YES	YES
Electrical digital audio out	YES	YES	YES	1123	YES	YES
i.Link in/out	NO/NO	YES/NO	NO/NO	YES/NO	NO	YES/NO
Photo card slot	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
VERDICT	We say: Sports a built-in Freeview digital terrestrial TV tuner	We say: A pity the i.Link is an input only as you car't output edited DV footage to a camcorder	We say: Included on Thomson's earlier media recorders, USB memory card readers for MP3s or digital pictures have been left out from this model	We say: Neither of the two Scart inputs will accept an RGB video signal	We say: Lacks a DV input but generally well-endowed with connections	We say: Not yet reviewed
Ease of Use			***	****	**	
Features			****	****	****	
Looks Picture			***	***	***	
Sound			***	***	***	
Value			**	***	****	
	We say: Not yet reviewed	We say: Not yet reviewed	We say: With a very muted playback of commercial DVDs, this is an average deck, although, even coupled with its underwhelming audio, it would serve a basic surround sound system adequately. Lack of digibox control and memory card or DV-input for	We say: With hard disk recorders DVD still relatively expensive, this deck makes a good substitute. Thanks to DVD-RAM compatibility, its editing features are many and extras like 'pause live TV are possible. DVD playback is good and much better	We say: It looks chunky and the remote is clunky, but it boasts excellent connectivity if not editing options, being DVD+RW compatible. The one- hour HQ recording mode is great, so this deck is for people who need to archive and is not the best for daily use	We say: Not yet reviewed
OVERALL			camcorders ensures a conclusion that this is a no- frills unit aimed squarely at the gadget-unconscious	than most entry level decks	***	

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